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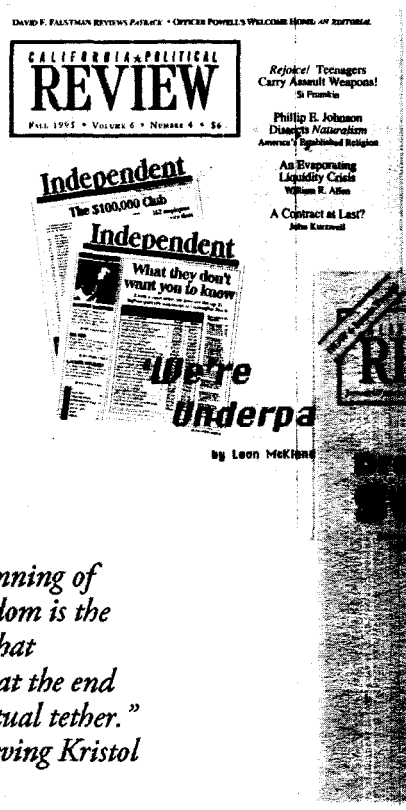

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CORRESPONDENCE

Trust Roper, Not Hout

Thank you for reporting the results of the CAS-Roper poll. ("A Preference for Equality," *CPR*, March/April). They clearly show that the University of California faculty is by no means opposed as a body to the Regents' recently enacted prohibition of racial, ethnic, and gender preferences and that the claims to the contrary of the radicals now firmly esconced in the university faculty and their collaborators in the administration are false.

Also thanks for exposing the duplicity of sociologist Michael Hout, director of the Survey Research Center at UC Berkeley. Rather than interpret it scientifically, Hout attempted to put a political spin on the poll apparently to protect the unfair, Balkanizing policies now afflicting the university. As many of your readers probably already know, this is only one of many symptoms of the corruption now infecting these institutions of higher learning.

It is a shame the press does not cover such facts as zealously as they do the often mendacious statistics and misleading reports issued by those who are determined at all costs to preserve preferences and quotas.

Glynn Custred
Department of Anthropology
California State University, Hayward

A Political Strategy Full of Holes

Your *Sacramento Spectator* (*CPR*, March/April) states: "The ever-pliant big business interests in the lobbyist community are now pouring money into the campaign coffers of their friends — just as under Willie Brown they poured money into the campaign coffers of their enemies." Just you wait! When election time comes, many will do the "prudent" thing and bet on *both* horses. I understand the thinking: that "you owe me one" will somehow pay off. But it is full of holes! Business interests considering this tactic should consider:

1) Both parties will know you have bribed both sides — often equally.

2) If your enemy was elected and you go to that person and ask for a partisan favor, it is more likely his party philosophy will be contrary to the position you are asking him to take. You will get a Dear John letter, with regrets.

3) You are not the only one stuffing money in the pockets of the office holder. When voting time comes, whatever vote is cast cannot please everyone. If *both* labor and management have contributed, or if *neither* has contributed, or if only one has contributed, a Democrat will normally vote pro-labor and a Republican will normally vote pro-consumer.

4) And — worse case — if your contribution was the bit that made it possible for the "wrong" candidate to win, you will have shot yourself in the foot!

In short, it only *seems* best to bet on both horses. I recall that the last time I went to a track, about 10 years ago, I bet two dollars each on the only two horses that could win. One of them *did* win — and paid three dollars! In this case I would have come out ahead only if I had bet them both to show, but in *politics* there is no prize for second, and no payoff.

If you simply *must* bribe your enemy, for God's sake — and yours — help your friend as much as you can until the vote count is final. If your enemy wins and you need a custom-made law, it is never too late to make a "campaign contribution." Terms can be arranged. Everything seems to be for sale in the political world.

Dr. Robert Hawkins
Santa Barbara

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SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

Your Faithful Observer has Spectated several juicy tidbits, so let's get right to them! Assembly Democrats have *still* not accepted it that they are no longer in the majority. They make such a habit of whining and moaning about the "unfair" treatment the Republicans mete out to them (treatment, by the way, which is usually *much* more evenhanded than the Demos provided when they were the majority) that their caucus meetings have been named "As the World Squirms" by some of the more jovial GOP members.

For some reason, the worst whiners in Democrat ranks are the black and Hispanic women members. They would rather disrupt and verbally insult than debate. And much to the surprise of veteran GOP observers, among the most even-handed of the Democrats is John Burton, the *very* liberal member from San Francisco. Burton's ability to put the change from majority to minority status in perspective and do so with an occasional flash of humor re-affirms your *Spectator's* belief that anyone who likes gin martinis can't be all bad.

This is not to say that the Democrats don't have good reason to be grumpy. Speaker Pringle and his merry men (yes, yes, and merry *women* for crying out loud) continue to advance the GOP agenda through the Assembly. Considering that there are 3 or 4 *very* weak (squishy actually is the more accurate, though less polite, term) members among Pringle's 41 GOP charges, the speaker has so far done an A-1 job in keeping things together. The tough budget season hasn't started yet, and that will be another stern test, though early indications of Pringle's leadership are excellent.

Kudos to California Independent Business PAC, (formerly Allied Business PAC) for being willing to bankroll the defeat of Brian Setencich in the GOP primary. Setencich, by all accounts a personable fellow, is simply over his head in the rough and tumble Assembly. An odd combination of naiveté and burning ambition allowed him to be rolled by Doris Allen and Willie Brown into supporting Allen, and then becoming the Democrat's speaker himself. Independent Business PAC did the state and the GOP a favor in removing this fellow from the scene before he could do any further damage. The Democrats are talking bravely about mounting a write-in on Setencich's behalf. It won't happen. Too expensive, and too many other, more competitive, races will have first dibs on Democrat money.

On the not so good news front, Republicans of all stripes were stunned when Attorney General Lungren totally exonerated Democrat members and staff in the "garbage-gate" investigation. Since becoming attorney general, Lungren has disappointed GOPers on several counts. Having seen a couple of the documents retrieved from the Democrat dumpster myself, your *Spectator* wonders who's in control at Lungren's shop. There was *plenty* of evidence to pursue prosecution of lower level Democrats to see where it might lead. That's how *real* prosecutors do it. Some have long suspected that Lungren sees the GOP as simply the most convenient vehicle to advance his career. His refusal to go further with this investigation is sure to lend credence to such speculation.

And to close on a truly joyous note, Pat Nolan, our own political prisoner, is back in Sacramento. He is at a halfway house until August, when he will be totally free. At least now he can see his wife and children. Welcome back Pat, your country and the Conservative Movement need you now more than ever!

—*A.P.C.*

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'Swindlers,' 'Predators,' 'Criminals'

and they weren't even talking about lawyers

MARK S. PULLIAM

ON THE subject of civil justice reform, the true meaning of the election results from March 26 won't be known until November 5. The trial lawyers succeeded in their multi-million dollar media campaign to demonize the business community as "swindlers," "predators," and "corporate criminals." Voters apparently detest Charles Keating — whom the trial lawyers used to personify the free enterprise system — even more than they despise attorneys. Automobile no fault and loser pays for shareholder class actions — Propositions 200 and 201 — were defeated by lopsided margins. Yet the most sweeping reform of the three sponsored by the Alliance to Revitalize California, Proposition 202's contingency fee limits for quick-settling cases, certainly would have passed had it been on the ballot by itself. In contrast to 200, which lost 65 to 35 percent, or 201, which fared slightly better at 59 to 41 percent, 202 came close to passing at 51 to 49 percent. Statewide, 202 lost by less than 140,000 votes. Of the three, it was the measure most feared by trial lawyers.

Thus, the March election battle was not so much a repudiation of civil justice reform as a confirmation — if one was needed — that millions of dollars worth of false and misleading TV ads can confuse and scare the electorate, and that the initiative process is not the ideal mechanism for resolving complex issues of public policy. (Until control of the Legislature can be pried from the grip of the trial lawyers, California voters have no alternative.) Reform suffered from light voter turnout and the trial lawyers' ability to outspend the Alliance during a critical phase of the campaign.

How could a relatively small number of plaintiffs' lawyers outspend the corporate establishment? Simple. The trial lawyers were better organized and they played to win. To begin with, the propositions lacked wide financial support from business. Aside from a handful of Silicon Valley firms, most of the usual players (insurance companies, for example) stayed on the sidelines. Meanwhile, the trial lawyers contributed a pile of money and also engaged in an unprecedented shakedown of litigation-related vendors and service providers. In an impressive display of hardball, the organized trial lawyers threatened to black-list court reporters, messenger services, and expert witnesses who did not contribute to defeat the initiatives. In light of the parasitic economic relationship between trial lawyers and their vendors, it is not surprising this tactic was effective.

Moreover, the insurance defense bar — normally the opponents of the plaintiffs' bar, but in litigation it takes two to tango — came to the trial lawyers' rescue. The Association of Southern California Defense Counsel and the California Defense Counsel both formed PACs to oppose no fault. Why? The cynical answer was provided by Robert Harrison, a San Diego insurance defense lawyer active in various defense counsel organizations. Debating your correspondent in *Dicta,* published by the San Diego County Bar Association, Harrison urged defense lawyers to contribute $1,000 each to defeat Proposition 200. As he put it:

> Getting up close and personal, even if you do not do auto work, this initiative promises to have a significant impact upon *your* practice. Passage of Proposition 200 will trigger a mass exodus of capable auto claims counsel into other areas of work. As such, what you and your firms do about this initiative in the next 30 days may well have a profound effect upon the livelihoods of yourself and your staff for the remainder of this century and well into the next. I am asking you to help in this fight and to play your part in helping yourself and the citizens of our state.

Defense lawyers are parasites, too.

At least one trial lawyer understood the lesson of the

Mark S. Pulliam, California Political Review's *legal issues correspondent, is an attorney in private practice in San Diego.*

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COMMENTARY

Well-Earned Accolades

Conservatives, it is said, too often did not take care of their wounded. Happily, the case of our friend Pat Nolan has proved that that rule has exceptions. The conservative movement, here in California and in Washington, D.C., at both the leadership and the grass roots levels, rallied enthusiastically and steadfastly to aid Pat and his family. If nothing else, perhaps the railroading and framing Pat has endured helped break that mold.

In the other direction, conservatives also too often fail to proclaim it when one of our own has earned a round of praise for a job well done. No doubt this is at least partly a reaction to the left's habit of fawning all over itself and assigning Wagnerian super-hero status to every mountebank and buffoon who trots himself out as a prince of liberals. Egad! They even tried to do it with Paul Horcher and Doris Allen!

But this is how the left poisons every well it touches. The rest of us should not let their abuse of good things drive us to cynicism or to deny ourselves proper accolades when circumstances warrant them — and the recently-concluded presidential primary campaigns entailed just such an instance. A longtime friend of *CPR* and member of our editorial board, Bill Saracino, served the Steve Forbes presidential campaign as Western States Political Director from October to April. (In that capacity, he contributed eloquently to our California Primary Presidential Roundtable in *CPR's* January/February issue.)

Bill's history of conservative activism and leadership began when he was in high school, working in the Goldwater for President campaign. Since then, he has fought valiantly in many political battles and, by all accounts,

Bill emerged as one of the stars of Forbes' national campaign.

In Alaska — where, in 1988, Pat Robertson received 68 percent of the vote against George Bush — Bill put together a coaltion of conservative activists and business groups. In that contest, although Forbes' 32 percent was second to Pat Buchanan's 33, Bill's strategy brought Forbes 9 delegates to Buchanan's 7.

Calamitous results in Iowa and New Hampshire made Arizona a must-win state for Forbes. Defying the "hopeless" spin of the national media, Forbes' strong volunteer effort persevered, implementing Bill's operational plan. Later, both Bob Dole and Pat Buchanan publicly credited Bill's plan for Forbes' surprise win in Arizona.

In California, Bill put together an impressive delegate slate and state operation in record time which was also — scandelous for a political consultant — *below* budget. The Forbes delegation featured such stalwarts as former state Senator H.L. Richardson, Assemblyman Tom Bordonaro, former Congressman Clair Burgener, anti-tax leaders Lew Uhler and Art Laffer, veteran conservative activist Kathleen Crow, and developer Randy Birtcher.

Bill also saw to the all-important campaign details: supervising successful ballot access operations in all of his 17 states, opening and staffing six regional offices, and providing relative newcomer Forbes and his national campaign people with much-needed contacts and communication within the mainstream conservative movement.

One statistic is perhap most telling: when it was all over, Bill's Western Region provided almost 70 percent of the delegates Forbes won, after having spent only a small fraction of the campaign's national budget. And — no surprise to those who know him — Bill achieved all this without sacrificing his trademark commitment to principle, his integrity, or his infectious good humor. Job well done! CPR

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March initiatives. Writing in the *Orange County Register* after the election, Shawn Steel pointed out that "contingency attorneys nearly lost their livelihood within a whisker." Steel, who is both a plaintiffs' lawyer and California Republican Party Treasurer, urged his attorney colleagues (who contribute almost exclusively to Democrats) to become more bipartisan and to participate in rational discussion of civil justice reform instead of kneejerk opposition. Steel, who before the election attacked auto no-fault and contingency fee limits in *CPR*, concluded with the observation that "[t]his is a splendid opportunity for lawyers to appreciate that a lot of people really hate them." Well said.

In an impressive display of hardball, trial lawyers threatened to black-list court reporters, messenger services, and expert witnesses who did not contribute to defeat the initiatives.

The March 26 election, however, was merely a warm up for the *real* action to come on the November 5 ballot. Securities class action mogul Bill Lerach has invested $1.8 million of his firm's money to qualify the so-called "Retirement Savings and Consumer Protection Act," which, if passed, would allow Lerach to bring nationwide class action lawsuits in California courts under greatly expanded liability rules. The Lerach initiative would effectively circumvent the securities reform legislation recently passed by Congress over President Clinton's veto, and then some. By creating new claims under state law and allowing the recovery of punitive damages, Lerach's initiative would make California a mecca for class action lawsuits and make the business environment here radioactive.

Perhaps the most outrageous example of media bias in the coverage of the March tort reform initiatives was by Tom Dresslar, who covers Sacramento for both *Los Angeles* and *San Francisco Daily Journals*, the state's largest circulation legal newspapers. In a March 13 article, Dresslar trashed 201, which would have imposed loser pays on certain types of shareholder class action litigation. Dresslar quoted a "conservative securities law scholar," Ben Stein, identified as a Pepperdine University School of Law Adjunct Professor, to the effect that Proposition 201 would protect people who are "stealing for a living" and would reward the "wrongdoer." Dresslar played up Stein's credentials as a Republican who formerly served as speech writer for Presidents Nixon and Ford, but he failed to mention that this bit actor and TV ad man is a notorious sycophant for Bill Lerach.

In fact, in his 1992 screed against Michael Milken, *A License to Steal*, Stein fawningly referred to Bill Lerach as "the world's premier trial lawyer," which is something not even Bill Lerach (whose ego is as big as his checkbook) believes. Dresslar also failed to tell his readers that Stein's *American Spectator* column regularly — almost obsessively — fulminates against tort reform. In a recent issue, Stein called proponents of shareholder litigation reform "corporate looters." A March 19 op-ed by Stein in the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, which read like a press release from the trial lawyers, called the three reform initiatives "wicked." Stein is entitled to his opinions, however eccentric and ill-advised. But to portray him as a conservative Republican or, worse, a scholar on the issue is tendentious in the extreme.

Readers who thought last issue's criticism of the state Supreme Court was off base were right; we weren't tough enough. After that issue came out, the Court issued rulings in two cases further illustrating just how immoderate — possibly even "extreme" — this Court's "moderation" really is. In *American Academy of Pediatrics v. Lungren*, by a 4-3 vote, the Court upheld the California statute requiring minors to obtain parental consent for an abortion (just as parental consent is required for a minor to obtain a drivers license, use a tanning salon, or get a tattoo). Justice Stanley Mosk, the Court's most liberal member, wrote the (unassailable) majority opinion. Justice Armand Arabian and Chief Justice Malcolm Lucas, both now retired from the Court, joined the majority opinion. (It is not clear whether recently-appointed Justice Ming Chin would have joined the majority had he heard the case.) Ronald George, recently elevated to chief justice, dissented, as did Justices Joyce Kennard and Kathryn Werdegar. There you have it. Pete Wilson's new chief justice is to the left of Stanley Mosk.

Smith v. Fair Employment and Housing Commission is just as bad. The Court, by a 4-3 vote, ruled that a devout Christian landlady must rent to an unmarried couple despite her religious objections to their lifestyle. This time Lucas, Kennard and Baxter were on the side of the widowed landlady's religious beliefs, whereas Chief George was among those opposed. Bob Dole commendably intends to make Bill Clinton's judicial appointments an issue in the presidential campaign. A rhetorical question: If Pete Wilson were the nominee, what could he say about his own record? CPR

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The Left's Big Day

TIM W. FERGUSON

DESPITE AN electorate in which Republicans outnumbered Democrats, the college-degreed were a majority of the turnout and the "gender gap" shouldn't have hurt conservatives because the weaker sex was less than half the vote, the March statewide primary was bad news down the line. The highway and school bonds passed overwhelmingly, ensuring billions of spending on union-wage, bureaucratically-bid public works — inflexible structures that cannot adapt to changes in traffic or enrollment patterns. California's cougar-protection absolutism was maintained, 58-42 percent, showing that the species-activism in urban classrooms and the media culture is having a steady effect on the popular mind. The rent-control lobby won big on mobile homes. And the plaintiff bar, of course, scored a knockout. Given all that, it's a wonder that the press didn't make more of the left's big day.

One exception was Robert Novak's syndicated column, which reported, "National Republican operatives were disconsolate" over the returns. "Those results raised Republican fears about the fate in November of the proposition to end affirmative action in California."

Where were all those editorial endorsements for the No Fault Initiative, a "good government" measure if ever there were one? Sacramento and San Diego dailies came through for Andy Tobias, the press-friendly architect of the plan, and so did the *Orange County Register,* but the two big fish, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle,* sided with the trial lawyers on all the "200s." These initiatives had their flaws, but is there any tort reform that will pass liberal muster?

On the subject of school bonds, do you know what it costs to build a campus these days? The *LA Weekly* backed into the fact that two high schools planned by the Los Angeles Unified School District are going to cost well over $100 million apiece. About $50 million has been spent obtaining the site of the former Ambassador Hotel, which the district has eyed for years, while $60 million has gone for 34 acres next to the Music Center downtown. At that location, Belmont High School is to be constructed for $75 million more, 18 percent of which will go to "soft costs" such as legal fees and consultants. Presumably anything built at the Ambassador parcel would be similarly expensive. Now, the LA district is overcrowded in these central-city areas, and costly busing needs will be alleviated somewhat if and when these schools are finished. But it's ironic that if provisions of Proposition 187 barring enrollment of illegal aliens were ever implemented, many of these central LA campuses would be nearly emptied and there would have been much less call for Proposition 203, the school bond just okayed.

The *LA Weekly* also rendered the service of describing in mid-petitioning some of the initative drives headed for the November ballot. This is something the dailies do a chronically poor job at. A major issue might draw an occasional advance story (the CCRI has had many, and the minimum-wage proposition got some late-in-the-signature process coverage), but usually the press pays little attention to those guys with the clipboards out working the malls and sporting events. As a result, when you're asked to sign any of a slew of initiatives, you search in vain for some background on who's behind the measure, so you don't have to try to parse the legal fine print with a shopping bag in your other hand. Your correspondent was presented with a measure requiring competitive bidding of public projects over a certain size. The idea sounded okay, but was this some trick a special interest was up to? (Re-

Tim W. Ferguson is California Political Review's *press critic.*

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member the trial lawyers and their "fee limitation" measure, headed for the November ballot.) Why can't the big papers give a running account of the measures in circulation, including the backers? The *LA Weekly* article told us who is behind the two medical-care mandate initiatives (the stricter one is sponsored by the Naderites and the now socialist California Nurses Association).

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

A while back, we noted that even the *Orange County Register* editorial page cheered the start-up of a law-school program at Chapman University, the county's first accredited training ground for litigators. One could argue that such a private sector effort — a second one has been mounted in Orange County via a satellite of Whittier College — is not to be criticized, though it does invite more use of federal student-aid programs to create professionals California hardly needs more of. But now comes word in the *Los Angeles Times* that UC Irvine backers want that school, too, to get into the legal-training racket. Not such good timing, folks. Governor Wilson appears to be going through with his proposal to privatize one of the four existing UC law schools. It's a long way from adopted, but it ought to ice the Irvine idea.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

A.G. Block of the increasingly strident *California Journal* was in a lather over the voter shenanigans attributed to Orange County GOP conservatives — a "sordid affair," "odious," "inflicts grievous wounds on the nation's soul." Okay, where were Block and the local lapdogs during the reign of Speaker Willie, the master manipulator of electoral politics?

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

The funniest "B.C." comics script in a long time was the one the *L.A. Times* composed on its Saturday religion page, accompanying several theretofore-missing panels from Johnny Hart's cartoon. The story sought to explain why the *Times* had spiked those pieces. Turns out their evangelical message "may be considered proselytizing and inappropriate for the comics pages," sayeth associate editor Narda Zacchino, *aka* Top *Times* Gal in the regular *Buzz* magazine column on the newspaper. The piece by religion writer Larry Stammer went on for 14 paragraphs trying to explain why Paul Conrad drawing Bob Dole being crucified by the Christian Coalition was one thing and Johnny Hart was quite another. Pat Robertson's people were wondering, you see. Conrad appears periodically on the op-ed page, where, according to Zacchino, "one expects to find political satire or thought-provoking *[sic]* articles and cartoons," including the ruminations of her lefty husband, Robert Scheer. In clearing that page each day, apparently, top *Times* gals and guys are not of the same mind toward "serving a large and quite diverse and pluralistic community" as when they "edit" the comics. What a bellylaugh. It was the best reading on the religion page in many a Sabbath's eve.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

Los Angeles County was upset to learn that a $373 million jail hasn't been opened because of a lack of operating funds. The sheriff (who forbids privatization) says he must release felons as a result. Wait! Remember Proposition 172, the sales tax increase that was supposed to pay for keeping us safe? Sheriff Sherman Block, head of the state's biggest local law-enforcement agency, says his county supervisors took every dollar he got from Proposition 172 and backed that amount of general taxation out of his budget. Similar sleight of hand has occurred elsewhere. In the private sector, Proposition 172 would amount to consumer fraud. Where are the reporters? Where is its promoter, Governor Wilson?

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

Wilson's most lasting legacy is likely to be his judges, and the bunch he's put on the Supreme Court are not yet earning him chits among conservatives. His latest appointee, Janice Rogers Brown, is said to be to the right of the governor, which cannot be said of Kathryn Werdegar, an earlier choice. The *San Francisco Chronicle* speculated that the two picks, along with Deukmejian's wayward selection, Joyce Kennard, would bring a collective consciousness that bodes well for "women's issues." It's not clear where the "woman's position" was when the court ruled 4-3 that a Christian lady couldn't refuse to rent to a couple (now split) whom she considered to be fornicators. Werdegar and Kennard were on different sides (surprisingly). But the two of them joined (along with then-Chief Justice-designate Ronald George) in heatedly dissenting from another 4-3 ruling, in favor of parental consent for teen abortions. If Wilson hopes to mollify the social right for his next bid for office, he'd better hope that Justice Brown keeps a distance from her sisters.

⚜ ⚜ ⚜

Erratum: A typo crept into last column's item on Senator Diane Watson. It was 18 years ago, not 16, that she left the Los Angeles school board to grace Sacramento, where it must seem like 118. CPR

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Scarcity Stories

Communing with the Sages of Mobile Home-Land

WILLIAM R. ALLEN

ECONOMISTS ARE the Rodney Dangerfields of the scholarly professions: they get no respect. Most people are demurely modest when confronted by problems of astrophysics or interpretation of minor poets of medieval Italy. But everyone knows all about work and wages, prices and profits, interest rates and inflation, budget deficits and balance of payments imbalances. Everyone, on the basis of only the instinct of the race, is his own economist.

Painful though it will be for both writer and reader, permit me to relate to you a true-life adventure which suggests that instinct alone may be an inadequate prerequisite for fruitful economic analysis.

In the recent California election, there was a proposition largely to eliminate rent controls on mobile-home parks. Economists are much inclined to look askance at Big and Little Brother decreeing any maximum or minimum prices and arbitrarily diluting private rights to use of property. This orientation and its application — both abstractly and empirically — to rent control was indicated in a newspaper op-ed by me.

A resident of a mobile-home park called me, evidently in sorrow and pity more than anger. She was astonished to learn that I failed to speak to tenants before writing. How could I comprehend that renters prefer low rents unless I have asked them?

Ever the missionary, I tried to convey some elemental and elementary analytics. We live in a world of scarcity, see? The fact of scarcity implies that we must make choices in our use of resources, and choice-making means cost-bearing. We do best, even if not well, in this lousy world by using an open market in which we can calculate costs and record preferences. Market-generated prices give incentive and guidance in making best use of assets. But if government stipulations mess up prices, we are misled into calculating and choosing inefficiently — and waste in a world of scarcity is a sin.

Alas, the lady remained a heathen. "Are you really a professor of economics?" she asked with supposed (and perhaps genuine) incredulity. "Yes," I responded. "Are you?" From that point of no return, the conversation deteriorated.

A man also contacted me, leaving a paper trail of correspondence which I share with you:

"Probably before you were born [he wrote], I earned a B.A. and an M.A. degree from UCLA, and then transferred to USC to work on my doctorate.

"In my day, a dissertation which contained only the information you reported in your article relative to Rent Control would have been rejected on the basis of very incomplete presentation of the facts.

"For example:

"1. In recent years, new mobile home parks have not been developed because of the astronomical increase in the cost of land.

"2. Several court cases have shown that park operators enjoyed a more than reasonable profit but simply refused to maintain their parks.

"3. Some park owners closed their parks in order to convert the land to other commercial uses as the result of the increase in the value of the land.

"4. While some sellers somewhere may have sold their mobile home for a profit, many more have taken a loss.

"Finally, the U.S. Supreme Court was not impressed with the arguments you advanced in your article."

THE SPIRIT of Adam Smith whispered into my ear the following response. "You seem not to be a gracious winner. Hardly to my surprise, your side won the rent control vote — but you still insist on trying to save my soul or to intimidate me or whatever.

"In contrast to you, I do not wish to be unkind or

William R. Allen manfully bears at UCLA the slings and arrows of outraged parasites.

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unreasonable. But, really, surely you are fooling in comparing a 600-word op-ed piece with a doctoral dissertation!

"Was your graduate work in economics? You evidently have not caught the tune of what market-pricing mechanism is about. *Of course,* new parks will not be developed, and, *of course,* old parks will be badly maintained or closed, when the land becomes more valuable in alternative uses. An arrangement of private rights to use of property and of open markets will see people choosing the best options they perceive. But you want it otherwise, denying the right of park owners to make most rational use of their assets, in order for you to receive subsidization (sharing wealth you have not produced) through government decrees. It may be that a persuasive case for discrimination favorable to you can be made, but the costs of such aid are most properly borne by the rest of the community generally, rather than by the property owners alone.

"It was good of you to share with me your little joke concerning the Supreme Court. Various courts have perennially protected massive amounts of economic policy foolishness, often cavalierly abrogating property rights in the process."

AND SO the wretched economist pathetically plods his dreary way from day to day, accepted seriously only by his noble dog. It would seem the compassionate thing to take an economist to lunch occasionally. But see to it that he stays with a soft, bland diet, for the poor dear doubtless has an ulcer. CPR

The 'Whole Language' Debacle

All that glitters is not gold ... and neither, it turns out, is everything advertised as 'phonics'

Robert W. Sweet

AT THE opening of the 20th century the United States' literacy rate was approaching 100 percent among those who had attended school, even for a limited amount of time. Today, nearly 20 percent of high school graduates can't read their own diplomas ....

Phonics is not a method of teaching; it is a body of knowledge. It is the 26 letters of the alphabet, the 44 sounds those letters make, and the 70 common ways those sounds are spelled. A method is a delivery system. Anyone, properly trained, can teach any child of normal sight, hearing, and intelligence to become an independent reader by the end of the first grade at the latest.

It is important to carefully define what we mean by "reading" because often there is surface agreement on the need to teach phonics, yet the practical classroom application varies widely. The classical dictionary definition of reading is: "To pronounce aloud written or printed words, letters or characters in the proper order; to say the names and the sounds customarily associated with words, letters, or characters; as, to read a written or printed selection." This definition is consistent with the scientific evidence of more than 60 years.

But most State Language Arts Frameworks recommend implicit or incidental phonics. They still refuse to accept the scientific evidence and apply it in their guidelines. Reading in these Frameworks is most often defined as follows: "Reading is a complex process through which readers actively construct meaning and connect with others' ideas." This latter definition would be consistent with implicit or incidental phonics, while the classical definitions is what leads to accurate decoding, and thus reading, of the English language.

Teachers, when asked if they teach phonics, would answer: yes. But there is a vast difference between what

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This article is excerpted from testimony delivered by Robert W. Sweet, Jr., president of the National Right to Read Foundation, on May 8, 1996, before the California Assembly Education Committee, Honorable Steve Baldwin, chairman.

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is taught in today's implicit phonics/whole language classroom and what is taught in a classroom using direct, systematic phonics. I am indebted to Dolores Hiskes of Livermore, California, a master teacher of many years, for some of the following illustrations that will help explain the difference between explicit and implicit phonics, and why there is such confusion among parents and teachers alike.

When we take piano lessons we learn one note at a time, then simple chords, and finally more complex combinations. At first, our total attention is on learning and practicing the piano keyboard. As these mechanics become automatic in recall, focus gradually begins to shift to the meaning and feeling of the music itself. Small subskills are built slowly, progressively, and systematically into larger ones and practiced until playing the piano is completely mastered. So it is with learning most skills: driving a car, learning another language, using a computer, learning how to dance, or building math skills.

That is the way it should be with learning how to read. And so it is with explicit, systematic phonics. The sounds and spelling patterns that comprise over 95 percent of the English language are learned one at a time and practiced until they are automatic in recall, gradually building by syllables into words, phrases, and sentences. This "building-and-blending" is a key feature of explicit phonics. As the mechanics of decoding becomes automatic, focus begins to shift naturally from decoding to meaning.

IF THE body of knowledge we call phonics is taught in a multisensory way, then teaching an individual to read is virtually 100 percent successful for everyone of normal sight, hearing and intelligence, no matter what their age or learning modality. But, this information has not generally been included in the college teaching curriculum for over fifty years, and most of the classic old teacher training or student texts have long been out of print.

The history of reading theory in this century has been a sorry affair. In the '30s and '40s it was the "Look and Say," controlled vocabulary, basal readers that used implicit, incidental phonics. Through the

Bill Honig's Troublesome Memory

THE LAST time anyone heard Bill Honig sound as conservative as he did at Assembly Education Committee Chairman Steve Baldwin's May 8 hearings, where he joined the grand chorus in demanding a restoration of phonics, was 'way back in 1982, when he first ran for California schools chief. Honig won by telling voters that improved content, not more spending, was the key to good education. Honig dropped that message instantly upon assuming office, moving sharply left not only on funding but spearheading a liberal revolt against what remained of traditional teaching methods including, especially, phonics. Now he claims it was all a misunderstanding. "It was my fault for not being clear enough," he told Baldwin's committee, "a sin of omission, not of commission." Horsefeathers, as John Marelius likes to say.

In the May *Inside California, IC* Managing Editor Mike Antonucci provides ample evidence that Honig should eschew such modesty. Some highlights:

"A *Sacramento Bee* story of December 21, 1986, indicated that a trashing of a skills-based approach is exactly what Honig had in mind. The *Bee* story read: 'A reading renaissance, led by state schools Superintendent Bill Honig, is sweeping across the state and nation as educators toss out the worksheets, dust off the bookshelves and invite vintage characters to transform students into connoisseurs of fine literature....

"[S]aid Shirley Hazlett, a language arts consultant with the education department: 'Before ... children were taught specific skills like phonics or finding the main idea. This is a more holistic approach.' ....

"In March 1988, a Honig task force concluded that California's kindergartens were 'overemphasizing rote learning methods and academic achievement.' Honig himself said, 'Too many children are being pushed into learning to read, write, add and subtract before they are ready.' ....

"In 1992 [a Honig task force recommended]: 'Reduce the amount of time spent on skill-based activities.'"

Not clear *enough,* Mr. Honig? "The same people," Antonucci concludes, "who destroyed reading instruction ... are attempting to co-opt and emasculate yet another attempt at honest reform." CPR

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'50s and '60s it was "Language Experiences," with implicit, incidental phonics, then came the '70s with its "psycholinguistic guessing game" and its version of implicit/incidental phonics, and then to the '80s and '90s with "whole language," and its "constructing meaning," skip and guess approach, with implicit/incidental phonics. For nearly three-quarters of the 20th century, implicit/incidental phonics with its work sheets, and drill books have been consistently used in most of America's elementary classrooms.

CONSEQUENTLY WE have produced three generations of miseducated children. They have been taught by teachers, most of whom are graduates of prestigious colleges of education where direct, systematic, explicit phonics instruction is still anathema today.

An exclusive elementary school in New York claims to teach phonics. There are 20 teachers, 14 reading specialists, and 400 K-3 students with an average IQ of 132. However, by fourth grade half of these students have been referred for reading disabilities.

Marva Collins' Westside Prep Elementary School in the heart of Chicago's South Side also claims to teach phonics. There are no reading specialists at all, yet all of the first graders are reading, and spelling words like "malignant" and "benign." Why such a difference, if both schools teach phonics? The answer is that the New York school uses implicit/incidental phonics in its whole language program, while Westside Prep teaches direct, explicit, systematic phonics. One would think the contrast would be self-evident. Building words from letters and syllables, moving from the smallest parts to the whole, or what is called "blending-and-building" is not usually taught in implicit/incidental phonics classrooms, and consequently the results are vastly different. It is precisely because of the widespread use of implicit/incidental phonics in our public schools today that we have our current illiteracy crisis.

We often hear that students have "different learning modes." And it is true that *how* students learn best is often different, but when it comes to learning a skill like phonics, *what* they learn should be the same. Everyone should be able to decode the longest words, syllable by syllable, no matter what their learning mode or style.

In a survey of experienced teachers to assess their knowledge of the structure of spoken and written language Louisa Cook Moats, director of teacher training at the Greenwood Institute in Purney, Vermont, and adjunct professor of clinical psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School, found that "typically, about 10 percent to 20 percent could consistently identify consonant blends in written words and only 30 percent could explain when *ck* was used in spelling."

The bottom line is this. Teachers cannot be expected to teach what they have not been taught. But since explicit, systematic phonics has not been taught in most public schools for most of this century, it is no wonder that teachers are threatened when asked to teach a skill that they have had little or no training to deliver. We must correct this intolerable situation now. The following recommendations are made for your consideration:

- Acknowledge that there is an illiteracy problem, and then get on with implementing the solution;

- Enforce AB 170 requiring that systematic, explicit phonics be taught in every kindergarten and first grade in the state;

- Require that teachers be certified to teach systematic, explicit phonics before they can teach in the elementary schools of California;

- Provide inservice training in how to teach reading with systematic, explicit phonics, and offer credit through the University System to do it;

- Require that any textbooks sold or used in the California school market, provide scientifically validated empirical evidence of their effectiveness.

WE MUST keep in mind that the importance of this issue goes far beyond the matter of students learning to decode the English language. It is a matter of maintaining our freedom as a people. In 1908 Thomas Briggs, author of Reading in Public Schools wrote: "From being the possession of the few, regarded by the people as a form of black art, reading has come to be the heritage of the many. The man who cannot read to some extent is now as rare as five hundred years ago he that could."

How tragic that at the end of the 20th century we cannot make the same boast. As we stand on the threshold of the 21st with all its promise, we cannot allow a solution to illiteracy, as simple as teaching our children the alphabetic principles directly and systematically, to escape us now. Let us resolve to do whatever it takes, even if it means admitting we have been wrong, to restore America to its proud heritage of being the most literate and free nation on the face of the earth. CPR

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The Bill Clinton

ERA OF BIG GOVERNMENT IS OVER

Series

The Pollen and Baloney Counts

Tom McClintock

THE REASON Sacramento is so insufferable this time of year is due to the unfortunate conjunction of two of the most unbearable banes of human existence. It is the allergy season. And it is budget time. Medical science has made little progress in controlling the effects

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Tom McClintock is director of Economic and Regulatory Affairs for the Claremont Institute. McClintock's recent study on the state's fiscal condition is available from the Claremont Institute, 250 West First Street, Claremont, CA, 91711, phone (909) 621-6825.

The Great California Comeback

James Brulte

WHAT A difference a Republican majority makes! For most readers of this publication, it is a given that low tax rates are the key to economic growth and job creation. However, it is only with the ascendancy of a Republican majority in the state Assembly that the self-evident truth of the beneficence of lower taxes is made manifest. For if

(Please turn to page 18)

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***McClintock**, from page 13*

of ragweed, and political science has failed to offer much relief from liberals. The pollen and baloney counts thus begin to rise together in March, and by June, the state capital is a veritable Chernobyl of spores and misinformation. This year, the liberal lament is that California's basic services have been starved by two decades of spending limitations and tax reductions, and that we need to raise taxes, not lower them. The best we can do is to take an antihistamine for the ragweed and a little history for the liberals.

HAVE THE state's services been starved by parsimonious fiscal policy? During the administration of Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown from 1959-1967, California government provided a cornucopia of services. During this period, California embarked upon an historic expansion of her highway and university systems. The state water project was constructed to provide for the needs of a growing and thirsty population. A college education was guaranteed free to every Californian who wanted one.

Surprisingly, California's golden age of government was financed with less than two-thirds of the funds the state is now consuming, after adjusting for both inflation and population growth. In FY 1965-66, the last full year of the Brown Administration, the state spent $1,070 per person (in 1995 inflation-adjusted dollars). Today, it spends $1,775 per person, an absolute increase of more than 65 percent beyond the combined growth of population and inflation.

Neither the aftermath of Proposition 13, which shifted some local financing to Sacramento, nor the Serrano decision, which required the state to equalize education expenditures, excuse or explain such a run-up. Total per capita inflation-adjusted spending is 31 percent more than 1972-73, the first year after Serrano. It is almost exactly the same as it was in 1978-79, the first full year after Proposition 13 (adjusting for the 1992 and 1993 property tax shifts). As the population nearly doubled from 18 to 33 million, simple economies of scale should have significantly reduced the per capita cost of providing a host of state services. Ironically, per capita costs have increased while the quality of those basic services has declined dramatically.

A failure to heed this lesson resulted in one of the most unnecessary and harmful follies in California history. In 1991, the largest single tax increase in American history was imposed on California's economy, courtesy of bi-partisan legislative majorities. It came to $8.3 billion of new taxes and fees, or about $1,081 annually from the income of an average family of four.

According to the budget babble that year, California could restore prosperity, eliminate the deficit, restore fiscal discipline and balance the state budget for the next five years by taking nearly $1,100 off the kitchen tables of every family in the state. In reality, the economy imploded to the point that state revenues fell nearly $6 billion below projections, state spending immediately jumped nine percent, and the next three budgets gushed red ink.

The tax package included a 20 percent increase in the retail sales tax. What happened to retail sales? (Note to Bill Lockyer: when you tax something, you get less of it.) In the following quarter, retail sales plunged faster than they had at any time in the prior 30 years. The package applied the sales tax to bunker fuels. What happened to bunker fuel sales? Sales at California ports dropped precipitously, and the tax was repealed the following year because it was not generating revenue. The package massively raised university fees. What happened to university enrollment? If you are starting to see a pattern emerging, you are ahead of the average liberal in the Legislature.

Since then, a revisionism has taken shape among Sacramento's liberals, who argue that the recession was caused by forces beyond Sacramento's control, and that the economic implo-

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sion following the tax increases was merely coincidental. It is said that California's economic recession was the result of the national recession magnified by disproportionate cuts in defense-related industries and an over-built real estate market. Well, O.K., all that didn't help. But there are a couple of things this theory doesn't explain.

For one thing, California didn't even rank in the top ten states in the percentage of its economy dependent on defense-related spending, and we performed significantly worse than states which relied on defense spending more. Economist Arthur Laffer noted:

"Defense prime contracts in California peaked in FY 1984 at $30.1 billion and declined steadily to $20.1 billion in FY 1989. Throughout these years the California economy was more healthy than the rest of the nation. From 1986 through 1989 the unemployment rate in California was less than the U.S. unemployment rate and home prices in California were appreciating relative to the rest of the nation.

More than three-fourths of the '91 tax increases have been repealed, have expired, or have been offset by regulatory relief.

"1991 was the first clear decline in the California economy relative to the U.S. economy. Defense prime contracts to California, however, actually increased over the 1990-91 period from $20.1 billion to $21.2 billion. The drop in prime contracts awarded to California companies does not correspond well to the drop in the state's economy. Prime contracts declined in real terms 28 percent from FY 1984 to FY 1989, while the state's economy was doing well. The decline in prime contracts from FY 1989 to FY 1992, the years of poor economic performance, was 8 percent."

Laffer's analysis of state dependency on percentage of defense prime contracts per percentage of personal income ranked California eleventh in the nation between 1990 and 1992. Yet all but one of the states that were ranked *more* reliant on defense spending saw greater growth in per capita personal income than California, including Arizona, Mississippi, Colorado, Alaska, and Missouri.

The second fact ignored by this strain of revisionism is that many California companies with major defense contracts were choosing to fulfill those contracts out of California. For example, in 1993, Hughes Aircraft announced its decision to transfer 1,900 engineering jobs from Canoga Park to Tucson, culminating in the loss of 7,000 jobs with the closure of satellite complexes in other parts of southern California. Hughes executives said they had run out of patience with California's anti-business climate and when the opportunity to move came, they took it. They expected to recoup the entire cost of the move in three years from the savings of doing business in Arizona — estimated in the tens of millions of dollars. Said Hughes CEO C. Michael Armstrong: "California is no longer a competitive place to do business." The company's division chairman said company representatives had appealed to the state for regulatory relief, but to no avail.

The conventional wisdom continues that with the most painful of the defense cuts behind us and with real estate prices bottoming out, California is through the worst and is now poised for explosive economic growth based on the strength of its small businesses, its motion picture and high tech industries and returning aerospace contracts, notably McDonnell-Douglas's C-17.

Actually, there is better news than this. More than three-fourths of the 1991 tax increases have been repealed, have expired, or have been offset by regulatory relief. In the aftermath of the 1991 debacle, the voters, Governor Wilson and most of the Legislature began to figure things out.

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In 1992, voters ordered the repeal of sales taxes on candy and snack foods and legislators repealed the bunker and jet fuel sales tax, for combined relief of more than $500 million. On December 31, 1995, the upper income tax brackets automatically reverted from their 1991 levels of 11 percent and 10 percent to a maximum of 9.3 percent, for a savings to taxpayers of $1.3 billion. Business tax credits for new equipment purchases and targeted business tax cuts were adopted in 1993, providing an additional savings of $600 million. *De facto* abolition of the unitary method of corporate tax assessments has provided additional tax relief. These tax reductions alone have offset more than one-fourth of the 1991 tax increases. Even more significant has been workers compensation regulation reform adopted in 1993 which has now resulted in cost reductions to California business of as much as $4 billion annually. California's economy performed well below national figures in the aftermath of the 1989, 1990, and 1991 tax increases. As tax and regulatory burdens were gradually eased, beginning in 1992, the economy gradually improved.

With this dosage of reality, we can now venture into the weed patch of liberal logic. To hear them, Pete Wilson's proposal to cut 15 percent from the state's income tax rates is fiscally irresponsible, radical, unfair to the poor, and unnecessary.

Let us take the issue of fiscal responsibility first. Ignoring the obvious hypocrisy, it must be conceded that California's fiscal condition is still precarious. The Department of Finance begins its current budget summary by boasting: "For the fifth consecutive year, the Governor's Budget continues the fiscal discipline necessary for California to live within its means, where spending from the State's General fund is being held below the amount of General Fund revenues."

Although it can be argued that fiscal discipline has been better than it was in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 fiscal years, the state's progress back from the brink of bankruptcy has been slower than the D.O.F. numbers first imply. The "balanced" numbers reported by the Department of Finance are attained, in part, by including loans and transfers of funds within the state budget, which distorts the actual balance of revenues and expenditures, hiding "off-budget loans" to schools and ignoring a full year of state pension obligations. When just these three gimmicks are factored out, the state has been in a condition of chronic deficit finance, from which it emerged just this year.

California's budget problem is that actual expenditures have significantly outpaced revenues over the past five years, with the accumulated gap filled with unprecedented levels of government borrowing. This borrowing not only increases the obligations that future budgets must address, but the growing interest costs of short- and long-term debt are placing additional upward pressure on expenditures. Both short-term and long-term debt is dramatic. G.O. bonded indebtedness doubled between 1990 and 1994, while lease-purchase debt has tripled in the same period. The percentage of general fund spending required to service this debt doubled between 1990 and 1994 and tripled between 1990 and 1996.

BUT THE revenue effect of the first year of phased-in personal income tax reductions is almost entirely offset by the effective tax increase proposed in the budget through the abolition of the renter's tax credit. The renter's tax credit was suspended in 1993, has since remained in abeyance, and is due to be restored automatically this year delivering a half-billion dollar tax cut to California renters. The proposed budget would abolish the credit, effectively increasing renters' income tax obligations beyond current law. Although income tax collections would be decreased by $572 million in the first year of the proposed tax cut, these revenues are offset by an additional $520 million in

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income taxes paid by renters, which would otherwise automatically be repealed. Thus, the net revenue effect of the combined package is virtually neutral in the first year of operation. Static losses of revenue do not occur until January of 1998, by which time the dynamic economic impact of the cuts can be expected to boost revenues.

The other objections are simply silly.

Radical? California's top marginal personal income tax rate of 9.3 percent is the highest in the nation. Across the border, Arizona Governor Fife Symington is pushing for the abolition of the Arizona state income tax. Nevada has no income tax; Oregon has no sales tax. California ranks among the highest states in both categories. Indeed, when the tax cut is fully phased in in 1999, it will comprise a roll-back of only *half* the 1991 tax increase. In liberal rhetoric, an $8.3 billion tax increase is "the only responsible thing to do," but a three-year phased-in tax cut of $4.7 billion is "radical."

Unfair to the poor? True, the package includes abolition of the renters' tax credit, but the poor end up doing comparatively better under this proposal than the rich. According to the Legislative Analyst, those earning more than $100,000 will end up paying a proportionately larger share of taxes. A taxpayer earning $40,000 or less would see twice the percentage reduction in tax rate as a taxpayer earning more than $250,000.

Unnecessary? Although California's economy is improving under the salubrious effects of gradual tax and regulatory reductions, Californians are still finding greener pastures in the middle of the Arizona and Nevada deserts. From January 1 to November 15, U-Haul moved four percent more families *out* of California than in, the worst numbers since 1992. A 20-foot Ryder Rental truck cost $528 to rent one way from Los Angeles to Tucson on January 17, 1996. To bring the same van one-way back to Los Angeles on the same day, Ryder offered the truck for $128. The same van from Sacramento to Seattle cost $712 on February 12. The return trip to California cost only $185. Allied Van Lines reported that in 1995, California had the third highest percentage of outbound one-way moves in the country, behind New York and North Dakota. Sixty one percent of Allied's household relocations were outbound from California; only 39 percent were inbound.

STARVE BASIC services? Not only is there no static revenue loss in the first year, California's experience with tax cuts is that the resulting spur to economic activity actually increases revenues over time. Even if there were no dynamic impact, which is contrary to every experience we have had with tax cuts, answers to California's infrastructure crisis must be found elsewhere. Experience since the Pat Brown administration suggests California's failure to provide basic services stems not from how much revenue it is receiving, but rather how that revenue is spent. If a golden age of California government is to return, it will come not because of increased revenues, but because of fundamental changes in the way policy makers spend those resources.

California is blessed by the most equitable climate in the North American continent. Geographically, it is poised on the Pacific rim, in a position to dominate trade in the next century. It has the most bountiful resources of any of the contiguous states. And yet for five years, it has suffered a continuing exodus of domestic population. An unprecedented number of Californians have found a better place to live, work, and raise families in the Nevada or Arizona deserts than they found in California. This exodus resulted from two factors: ragweed and liberals. The ragweed has always been here; the liberals are a more recent development. Given the right policies, there is every reason to expect California to resume the prosperity, optimism, and growth that characterized her history as recently as the Pat Brown administration, when inflation-adjusted per capita spending was 38 percent less than it is today. A modest step in this direction is the governor's tax cut. CPR

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Brulte, *from page 13*
the truism is correct, and politics is the art of the possible, then the realization of a major tax cut for California businesses and families can only occur as a result of the Republican electoral gains of 1994.

FROM THE perspective of some observers across the nation, and a number of media pundits who should know better, California is perceived as a "low tax" state. This perception stems in large part from the role our state played as home of the original "Taxpayers Revolt" — Proposition 13 — and from the important role Ronald Reagan played as political leader, policy leader, and President in the era of tax reduction. Sadly, however, business leaders both within and outside the state know far too well how high California's taxes really are. Consider the following:

• As California purportedly seeks to roll out the welcome mat to new business, we greet them with the highest corporate tax rates among all Western competitor states, a tax rate which is the sixth highest in the entire nation, and fully 50 percent higher than the national average.

• California holds the dubious distinction of levying the highest tax and fee burden per worker among all Western competitor states, and again places sixth highest in the nation in this category.

• For those who like to compare tax burdens as a percentage of personal income, here is yet another chilling statistic: California ranks as the fifth highest of 50 states — higher than *every* regional and industrial competitor state — in corporate taxes as a percent of personal income, fully 67 percent *above* the national average in this category.

As Will Rogers was fond of saying, there are lies, damn lies, and statistics. These statistics are damning testimony to the folly of a high-tax policy which has permeated the Legislature for a quarter century. And this is just part of detailing how a state once looked to as a leader in job creation fell sadly behind the pack due to a corporate tax structure that discourages business from coming to, staying in, and growing with California.

Consider the example of California's "gateway" tax for a newly-created business, the Minimum Franchise Tax. When it comes to entrepreneurship and individual initiative, there is no greater example of the major structural impediment which California places in the way of small business creation.

To create a new corporation in this state, California requires an up-front payment of $800. Nevada has a $50 franchise fee.

To create a new corporation in this state, California requires an immediate, up-front payment of $800 — a minimum franchise tax which has quadrupled in last decade. Different parties view the incidence of this tax in different ways. Tax lawyers and tax collectors for the welfare state feel that $800 tax is "payment for the privilege of using the corporate form." To my mind it is an outrageous impediment to individual initiative, one made even more outrageous given a belief that the ability to create a new business, new jobs and opportunities for oneself and others is not a privilege conferred by government, it is the birthright of all who dare to take the risks of the marketplace. But to competitor states — such as Nevada, which has a $50 franchise fee — this $800 fee is an open invitation to lure California jobs and California entrepreneurs to their state.

Unfortunately, it gets worse. California also

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requires that a newly-created corporation pay *another* $800 as part of its first quarter estimated taxes. That's a total of $1,600 within the first few weeks or months of a new business. Of course, these taxes are owed whether or not the corporation turns a profit, and are not refundable. This may very well make you think twice about braving the chill waters of the marketplace, or at least dipping your toe in the more inviting waters of a lower tax state.

Yet if California's business climate is burdened by high business tax rates and imprudent tax policy that stands in the way of job creation — and it is — California's working families are struggling every bit as much.

In November 1994, the Policy Economics Group of KPMG Peat Marwick completed a comprehensive Comparative Analysis survey on behalf of the governor of North Carolina. While the Analysis was intended to serve as a guide for policy making in that state, it speaks volumes as to the profound tax burden California's personal income tax places on middle-income families. While California boasts a highly progressive personal tax structure — the most progressive in the nation — once we look beyond the lowest wage earners in the state, California's progressivity loses its luster, and becomes yet another invitation to working men, women, and their families to consider re-locating.

According to the Peat Marwick study, of the 21 "Competitor States" surveyed, California had the 10th highest estimated tax burden for a family of four with adjusted gross income (AGI) of $30,000 per year, the sixth highest estimated tax burden for a family of four with AGI of $50,000 per year, the fifth highest at $75,000 of AGI. The Peat Marwick study tells us in stark terms what many of us already know: California's middle-income families and individual wage earners are overtaxed, and the incidence of over-taxation *grows significantly* as a family or an individual earns more income. In fact, the state's highest tax bracket of 9.3 percent ranks as the very highest of any Western competitor state, and is the *third* highest marginal personal income tax rate in the nation.

California's personal income tax remains 17 percent above the national average, despite the inherent progressivity at the lowest income levels. Finally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, between 1990 and 1993, the disposable personal income of Californians grew at the slowest rate of all 50 states.

The prescription then, is clear. We must reduce taxes for *both* California businesses and families, and restore the luster of the Golden State as the leader in both job creation and entrepreneurship as well as quality of life for families and children. To this end, it is my great pleasure to serve as the author of Assembly Bill 2033, Governor Pete Wilson's three-year, 15 percent reduction in both the state Personal Income Tax, as well as the state Bank and Corporations Tax rates.

According to a recent study by the Hoover Institution, enactment of AB 2033 will result in the creation of fully 250,000 new California jobs over the next five years. And according to statistical analysis of the bill, fully 359,000 California families — all of them low- and middle-income families — will be taken off the tax rolls altogether. In all 18 million taxpayers will reap the benefits of this legislation.

TWO MORE points must be made in the ongoing debate over tax policy, if for no other reason than to anticipate and debunk the principal argument of those who will oppose this or any other tax cut measure on the grounds that education will lose revenues and schools will suffer. First, the enactment of Proposition 98 — and its provision of a minimum funding guarantee for California education — in no way intended that the state would never again see a reduction in tax rates. It did not mean that any such tax cut necessarily would result in a "reduction" of funding for schools. Proposition 98 provided a guaranteed minimum funding mechanism for education in this state, and enactment of AB 2033 *in no way*

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jeopardizes that funding guarantee. Governor Wilson's 1996-97 budget proposal provides for $31.9 *billion* in total funding for primary and secondary education; this is an increase of $6.9 *billion* over 1990-91 funding levels. Furthermore, along with budget increases for education in this and the last fiscal year, the governor's budget calls for fully $6,800 in *increased spending per classroom* when compared to 1994-95 budget levels. In short, even after the full impact of the governor's tax cut, education spending will continue to rise by several *billion* dollars. That's an *increase* in spending by any measure.

I reject categorically the view that one can only be a friend of public education by renouncing any and every form of tax reduction, and I further reject the notion that those who support a tax cut are somehow an enemy of public schools. The worst thing any of us can do is to Balkanize our state budget in a zero-sum game of personal spending preferences, and to demonize those who dare disagree with our views. For while we are all called upon to establish priorities for the use of taxpayer money — and clearly Proposition 98 is the enshrining in our state Constitution of a spending priority — we are further challenged to establish policies that will strengthen the economy and thereby insure a reliable revenue-flow to government and full funding of vital public services.

In short, we must be forever mindful of the hard-working men and women who pay these taxes, and for whom the idea of a tax cut means the ability to save and spend more of their own hard-earned dollars. This is first and foremost *their money,* and it is they — and not government — who may rightly lay first claim to it.

Given a new Assembly Republican majority, we can be confident — at least for this legislative session — that the Legislature will not revisit the mistakes of 1990 and 1991, when it succumbed to the arguments in favor of increasing taxes. On paper, the combined effect of the 1991 tax increase, when added to the anticipated revenues from enactment of Proposition 111, reflected a 17.1 percent *increase* in total state tax revenues. However, rather than a 17 percent increase, total tax revenues actually *fell* so far it was fully three years before the state budget returned to where it had been *before* the tax increases. It's a fact: raising taxes in a recession *lowers* economic activity, so that total tax revenues decline despite higher rates.

The words of a famous 19th Century U.S. Supreme Court decision are as sad as they are true: the power to tax is the power to destroy — to destroy jobs and opportunity for today and hope for a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow. By contrast, upon full implementation of Governor Wilson's tax cut proposal, we can be confident of two things: a surging economy buoyed by the strength of literally billions of new dollars of private sector savings and investment and full statutory funding for state services.

FINALLY, THE profound changes in the composition of the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee — what was a 7-4 Democrat majority is now a 6-3 Republican majority — have had their intended effect: not a single dime's worth of tax increases have passed out of the Assembly's tax policy committee. In addition, all "revenue neutral bills" — bills that "offset" tax cuts for one group with tax increases for another, a clear violation of the intent of Proposition 13 — have been amended to remove tax increases. Literally dozens of good tax cut measures, many passed with bipartisan support, have made their way to the Democrat-controlled state Senate.

Allow me to end as I began: the self-evident truth of tax cuts as the key to economic growth, job creation, and entrepreneurial opportunity is not lost on any of my Republican colleagues. In the months ahead, my sincere hope is that Democrats in both houses will join us in "taking the pledge" against new and higher taxes and in sending to the governor's desk a sure-fire economic blueprint for a better tomorrow, the essential ingredient in the Great California Comeback: a three-year, 15 percent reduction in both personal and corporate income taxes. CPR

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Power, Ambition, and Michael Capizzi

Why has Orange County's DA spent more than half a million tax dollars to criminalize a political maneuver of zero impact? Murderers and rapists get by with less scrutiny ... and so did Robert Citron.

Dana Rohrabacher

THERE IS no great mystery surrounding the candidacy of Democrat Laurie Campbell. We know the cast of characters, a group of young GOP activists out to save the party. And we know they assisted Campbell's candidacy by gathering the signatures needed to put her name on the ballot. It was a bad idea because it appeared underhanded, but their political stunt was totally legal. There's no crime in Republicans helping a Democrat get on the ballot in a special election. And with the passage of the so-called Open Primary Initiative the practice will likely become widespread.

The lingering question in Orange County involves District Attorney Michael Capizzi's all-out assault on these young Republicans. Capizzi has spent more than half a million tax dollars to criminalize a political maneuver that had zero impact on the election in question — a judge removed Campbell's name from the ballot long before voters went to the polls. Capizzi has dropped investigations into child and senior abuse and pulled staffers off of arson cases. Most murderers and rapists don't receive this kind of scrutiny, and neither did Orange County Treasurer Robert Citron.

DA Capizzi acted like a silent partner in the Orange County bankruptcy. The county's top legal watchdog didn't make a sound as the former County Treasurer gambled away more than a billion dollars in taxpayers' funds. And Capizzi ignored public warnings about Citron's misdeeds months in advance of the county's financial collapse. A little vigilance from Mr. Capizzi would have averted this municipal disaster.

Capizzi also brushed aside complaints of widespread classroom electioneering by public school teachers opposed to the school voucher initiative, Proposition 174, and reports of widespread voter fraud by a voter project registering illegal aliens to vote prior to the vote on Proposition 187. So forgive me for being surprised and a little suspicious of Capizzi's zealous pursuit of these youthful Republican activists.

Why would DA Capizzi waste the resources of his department and put so much effort into criminalizing what is at worst a political mistake? No other DA in California would have charged anyone in this case with a felony, and the California Fair Political Practices Commission routinely handles campaign finance violations like those Scott Baugh has been charged with.

Recent news reports about a Capizzi bid for California Attorney General suggest a motive. With the cloud of Orange County's bankruptcy hovering overhead, Capizzi is a dead duck in a statewide election. Even the most inept candidate could eviscerate Capizzi as a silent partner in the bankruptcy debacle. He needed to do something dramatic to put the bankruptcy behind him. The *Los Angeles Times* served up the controversy Capizzi was looking for. A sexy scandal plastered all over the front page, the *Times* told a murky tale of Republican dirty tricks. Capizzi leapt at opportunity.

BUT THE *Times* misreported the story, their coverage designed to paint a distorted and untrue picture. Page after page, over and over again, week after week, the *Times* intentionally crafted stories to create the false impression of an illegal conspiracy. Only after I screamed foul did the *Times* stories add one phrase admitting everything that had been described was perfectly legal. This after elongated torrid accounts, dripping with connotations of illegal wrongdoing.

The worst of the dishonesty in the *Times* reporting was its attacks on Scott's own honesty. Readers were

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given the impression Scott lied about knowing Laurie Campbell. Only after lying about it, the public was told again and again, did he admit knowing Laurie Campbell. Little did the public, or Mr. Capizzi, know all of this supposed "lying" and "admitting" occurred in a single interview in which a *Times* reporter peppered Scott with questions. Scott either hedged his answer about knowing Laurie Campbell or was trying to answer three questions at once. What is important, and totally contrary to the impression the *Times* is giving to the public, Scott stopped the reporter before the end of the interview and clarified his position, stating plainly that, yes, he knew Laurie Campbell, but he was not responsible for putting her on the ballot. *That* was portrayed again and again as Scott lying about knowing Laurie and changing his story later. The *Times* story created a false impression with the public even though the reporter's copy may be technically accurate.

This false impression created by the *Times,* I believe, led Capizzi to miscalculate. Capizzi of course denies his decision to criminalize political activity was influenced by *Times* reporting. But Eileen Padberg, manager of Capizzi's campaign for district attorney, was recently quoted, *"The L.A. Times* was investigating it so aggressively that he had to take a look at it. Now he's not going to walk away."

When confronted with the fact that his own nomination papers had not been filled out in accordance with the law, District Attorney Capizzi shot back that Scott lied about knowing Laurie Campbell and changed his story later. Obviously a mind set was propelling the district attorney to make wrong decisions that have caused great harm to Scott Baugh and virtually destroyed the lives of some young people who had bad judgement but did not break the law.

HAVING LEAPT at the *Times'* bait in a very public way, Capizzi is left in a precarious position. The case he builds is razor thin and based on one alleged breach of law. Forty signatures were gathered to place Laurie Campbell on the ballot. She signed the bottom of the petition claiming to have gathered the signatures herself. Capizzi asserts that is a felony and those involved with the effort were involved in a conspiracy to commit this felony. That is the charge against my campaign manager, Rhonda Carmony.

Only one person in the history of the state has been charged with the crime of improperly signing a candidate petition, that being a Communist in 1937, an obvious case of selective prosecution. No one has ever been charged with a conspiracy to commit this so-called crime. Capizzi is totally out of line resurrecting ancient statutes and dreaming up new offenses to hurl at these young activists.

MAKING CAPIZZI'S actions even harder to swallow, there is ample evidence that Linda Moulton-Patterson, the Democrat candidate, also signed petitions she did not circulate, exactly what Campbell supposedly did. But the DA did not ask Patterson about this when she appeared before the Grand Jury during its deliberation about Laurie Campbell's candidacy and he has shown little interest in investigating. That is consistent with what everyone expects in such cases. Over the years the circulator's section of candidate nominating petitions has not been looked at as important enough even to warrant attention, much less prosecution. When Mr. Capizzi admitted his own petitions were not filled out in accordance with the law, Attorney General Dan Lungren said it wasn't worth prosecuting. *That is the point.* Capizzi spends truckloads of tax dollars and destroys the lives of young people on the slender legal thread that paperwork had not been filled out in accordance with the law.

Finally, and perhaps most significant, Mr. Capizzi is charging a group of young Republican activists with committing felonies for activities *he himself engaged in* while a member of the DA's staff. In 1972 Mr. Capizzi, a young deputy DA, was deeply involved in the effort to gather the signatures necessary to put an initiative about the death penalty on the California ballot. He worked closely with Dr. Howard Garber of Anaheim Hills. According to Dr. Garber, Capizzi noticed that on many of the petitions that were filled out no one had signed as circulator. Dr. Garber asked the young deputy district attorney whether he should sign his own name even though he had not circulated the petitions. The deputy district attorney instructed him to go ahead and falsely sign as the circulator of 20 or 30 petitions. He watched as Dr. Garber signed. All of this is according to Dr. Garber, who is now upset that Mike Capizzi is wasting tax dollars and ruining young people's lives for something he himself did on a much grander scale. Capizzi, of course, denies Dr. Garber's account. But Dr. Garber's wife witnessed the whole thing, and Capizzi has no witnesses to support his story.

By Mike Capizzi's standard, he was guilty of criminal conspiracy. Those falsified petitions could not have been submitted, except for the perjury he instructed Dr. Garber to commit. Furthermore, Mr. Capizzi was an officer of the court at the time, not just some young

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idealist rushing around at the last minute trying to accomplish the legal maneuver of putting a candidate on the ballot, but botching the paperwork.

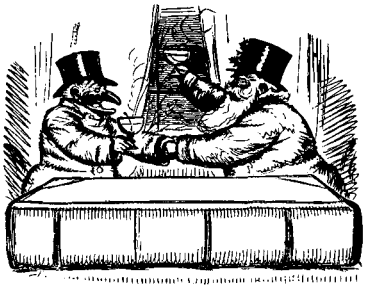
Now, Capizzi ends up charging Maureen Werft, Scott Baugh's Administrative Assistant, with *felony voter fraud.* The public still is unaware that Maureen's alleged crime is registering to vote at a friend's house in her home town at a time she was working temporarily in Sacramento.

Capizzi is not only out of line, he's gone beyond the pale. We all know he sent seven armed investigators into Scott Baugh's home a few days before Christmas. Then he had the arrogance to seal from public view the affadavit justifying the search warrant. Then, as we've found out, Capizzi has had his investigators look into the sex life of everybody who has anything to do with this case. How is that related to voter registration and nominating petitions? This type of gutter intimidation is not worthy of the Orange County District Attorney's Office and certainly not acceptable for a candidate for California Attorney General.

Instead of grandstanding in an effort to deflect attention from his shameful role in the Orange County bankruptcy and to launch his campaign for statewide office, Capizzi should have permitted this whole issue to go to the California Fair Political Practices Commission, just like every other DA in the state would have done.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S done great injustice to young people for a mistake in judgement that is no where near as bad as his judgement as a deputy DA when he was only slightly older than those he now accuses. Capizzi has been off base since the first day he put down his *L.A. Times* and decided to do something dramatic. CPR

ARTS & CULTURE



CRITICUS

Ghosts in the Machines

BY G. B. TENNYSON

WE KNOW that it takes at least one other member of a village than the nominal author to write a book by Hillary Clinton, the world's smartest woman. We also know it takes yet a third to suggest a title by example, which is to say that HRC's book title had already been used by another author the year before. What we do not often reflect upon is that it takes many villagers to write all the other celebrity books that increasingly occupy the spots on the best-seller lists. Indeed we do not often reflect upon the phenomenon of the celebrity book itself. Or upon the celebrity book tour and the celebrity book signing. Or upon the nature of readers of celebrity books. The

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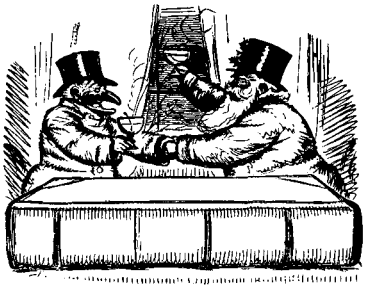

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whole business of books by other hands is simply taken as part of the contemporary intellectual landscape, not greatly different from having stand-ins and stunt men in films. We all know such persons are used, but we don't think much about them and probably don't think about them at all during the actual viewing of a film once the story has taken over.

Even as Konrad Adenauer was reading German Romantic poetry every night before retiring, the Kennedy family was embarking on its crusade to make the world richer for ghostwriters.

HEREWITH A different perspective. First of all, why are there celebrity books in the first place? The apparent answer is that people want to read them. But why should anyone want to read a book — usually an autobiography or some reflections on contemporary matters — by a public figure but actually written by someone else? Who are these "readers" who are content to spend fair sums of money to buy such books and, more amazing yet, to stand in line at book signings to get an autographed copy of the book by the celebrity posing as "author."

First, the celebrity book itself. In the past, prominent public figures often wrote real books. Those Victorian prime ministers and rivals Gladstone and Disraeli both wrote books. Disraeli wrote novels with political import; he also wrote verse, drama, biography, and works on politics. Gladstone wrote, incredibly it now seems, studies of Homer and Greek literature, as well as political and historical works, in between ministerial terms and when not patrolling the nighttime London streets to accost fallen women and direct them into Magdalen houses. He used to read to them from Tennyson's poetry, especially "Guinevere" from the *Idylls of the King* as a means of bringing them to repentance. Each — Gladstone and Disraeli, that is, not the Magdalens — wrote his own speeches, as we know Mr. Lincoln also did, especially in that one instance on the train and using the back of an envelope. Both the president and vice president of the Confederacy wrote lengthy accounts of aspects of the Unpleasantness. Even a besotted old butcher like U.S. Grant wrote his own memoirs all the way up to the point as he lay dying. Matthew Arnold rightly sniffed at the cumbersome style, while Mark Twain in compatriot loyalty defended it. At all events, it was clearly Grant's.

The tradition of public figures writing about their lives or about public affairs continued into the twentieth century, and it is difficult to pinpoint the time of transition from books written by public figures to books written *as if* by them. It appears that the change came in and about the time of the Second World War and sooner in the United States than elsewhere. Churchill certainly wrote his own works, but did Eisenhower? To be sure, Eleanor Roosevelt appears to have written her own, setting an example that her self-professed epigone Hillary the Impaler did not follow. But even as Konrad Adenauer was reading German Romantic poetry every night before retiring, the Kennedy family was embarking on its crusade to make the world richer for ghostwriters by seeing to it that John F. Kennedy's Harvard senior thesis got written and published, to be followed by his war adventures and later by *Profiles in Courage*. And that's just the Number One Son.

In those relatively early days of ghostwriting, however, the ghosts were true ghosts, that is, not publicly revealed, save perhaps for the occasional obscure, nonspecific thank you in a preface, if that. None of that self-protective "as told to" or "with" that nowadays is designed to deflect criticism. Just think what St. Martin Luther King could have saved himself if he had merely subtitled his dissertation "as previously written by ...."

Here it is time for Criticus to declare an interest, as the British put it, that is, to make clear a possible slant or prejudice so that the reader can take it into account. That "interest" is that Criticus was himself once a ghostwriter, or rather, Criticus was a one-time ghostwriter. Although this means that I am not looking at the phenomenon of ghostwriting entirely objectively, it also means I may have an insight denied to others.

Actually my ghostwriting experience was fairly mundane. It leads me to believe that much ghostwrit-

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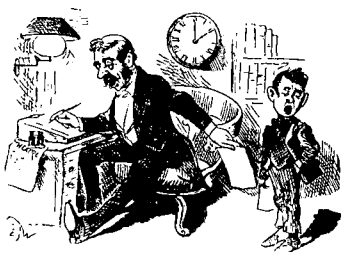
ing is fairly mundane, unless one is working for a taskmistress like Lady Macbeth. My profile in ghosting came about as follows. Through a connection now but dimly recalled as having to do with a commercial publishing company of one of my quasi-academic books now long out of print (the publishing company has been swallowed up too), I became acquainted with a former luminary of that same New York firm who was then — this is years agone — starting his own publishing company in Southern California. He thought the relative clarity of my work for the big publishing house suited me to do a job of ghostwriting he had in mind. This, of course, was before Criticus's style had attained its present pinnacle of convolution. Believe it or not, Constant Readers, the subject was: Marijuana. Not the praise of it, mind, but the dangers of it. At least Criticus would get to sermonize a bit.



Not a single booth appeared to be devoted to anything that could be called works of scholarship . . . . But then this event was only being held on the campus of the largest university in the state.

The fact that Criticus was quite ignorant on the subject made no difference. That is a point to be remembered when reading celebrity books. It is one of the reasons that they read so blandly and often stupidly. Following the dictum of a former professor of mine — "If I've heard of it, I can teach it" — one can do likewise with writing: "If I've heard of it, I can write about it." And it is true, except that it generally means the writing will lack heart and soul. This is no great disadvantage when the subject is purely factual or when the pretend author is Lady Macbeth who already lacks heart and soul, but it can make a difference with other topics and other authors.

AT ALL events the ghosting went forward. It consisted in my case of having some patchy notes and comments by the "author," and then of a series of meetings with said author and the publisher during which we discussed what should be included and in what order. Criticus would then go off and write a chapter, which would be submitted to the author for his approval. If changes were necessary these would be pointed out, either in meeting or through an intermediary, and Criticus would incorporate them. It went on like this for a while, perhaps two or three months, with perhaps a half-dozen meetings, none of them of great length. Indeed, the most active figure in this particular enterprise, apart from the ghosting Criticus, was the publisher who had many very good ideas about organization, what topics would sell, how to highlight them, and the like. From this I learned that most ghost-written books are in no small measure the work of yet ghostlier ghosts — the facilitators. These are not likely the publishers themselves anymore, certainly not with large firms, but they function much as my publisher did, as the go-betweens who keep the project going and in the end bring home the manuscript. Was this the true editorial role of the late Mrs. Onassis?

Well, so it was in my brief career as ghost. In the fullness of time a book emerged. How it fared I never knew. As a hired hack, I was paid a flat fee and sent on my ghostly way. Poor Criticus cannot today even find a copy of the book, though surely it is there amidst the detritus that passes for storage in the Critical garage. Nor can this onetime ghost even remember whether he was thanked in the preface, though he thinks probably yes. What does linger in the mind's eye is the very striking cover, which was again, as I recall, the idea of the facilitator. It consisted of nothing more than words, words, words (of course Criticus would like that), but the words were all synonyms for, what else? Marijuana. They were lined up across the cover in bright colors — red and blue on white, methinks — and in varied typefaces, running from top to bottom: Marijuana — Mary Jane — Grass — Pot .... Well, you all know them better than Criticus whose inhaling encounter with the forbidden substance brought forth choking, headache, nausea — the classic Clinton responses. That encounter, needless to say, was undertaken in a vain effort to lend authenticity to Criticus's ghosting.

With that one book my career as a ghost came to an end, not, I stress, because I was such a poor ghost but because the publishing enterprise came to an end or perhaps was purchased and absorbed by a larger en-

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terprise. I later heard the publisher was spotted in Paris. Since this was before the conversion and irresistible attraction of the Gare D'Orsay of which Criticus has written in a previous number, I can only assume that, like all good Americans, he went there to die. His legacy to me was what modern students infelicitously like to call a "learning experience," the essence of which I have already conveyed, *viz.*, the ghosted book, even more the celebrity book, is a market-driven enterprise. It has virtually nothing to do with the writing of books as this activity has been known throughout history. It has more in common with the devising of an appealing brand of breakfast cereal or packaged food, or the redivising of such (*e.g.* the dropping of "Sugar" from the name, "Sugar Frosted Flakes" and the renaming of "Noodle Roni" as "Pasta Roni," both products remaining otherwise the same), or a new fragrance (Black Diamonds? or is it Purple Pearls? or Roseanne's Passion?), or any of the numberless commodities produced by and for a consumer society. Celebrity books are viewed as consumable, like any other product.

The market dimension of ghosted and celebrity books has increased greatly in the years since Criticus pulled the marionette strings warning of the perils of reefer madness. For to the ghosted book has been added the celebrity tour, the celebrity television appearance, and the celebrity book signing. Even the growth of the massive chain bookstores seems to be part of the phenomenon, designed as they are as entertainment centers, with their adjoining coffee houses and reading areas, children's hours, and all the rest. Celebrity books themselves are becoming more disposable, mere pretexts for meeting the celebrity — the price for which is buying the book — rather than for buying a book to read. One suspects indeed that the point of attending a celebrity signing and buying the book is not actually to *read* the book but to *have* it, and to have it by virtue of having been there. In other words, the celebrity book signing is simply marketing disguised as entertainment, a diversion and change from movie-going or having your nails done, and one that gives you something to take home and keep for a while. In due course it will be put in the garage or given to the thrift shop, just as the publisher in due course will remainder, or has remaindered, all the unsold copies of such treasures as Jimmy Carter's *Why Not the Best?,* or Walter Mondale's *The Accountability of Power,* or, remember her? Ferraro, *My Story,* or even Hillary's and Tipper's husbands' *Putting People First,* to say nothing of what will happen to the O.J. Simpson books or the ones that will come forth from the Menendez trial. A truly clever ploy, which Criticus here offers free of charge to an enterprising publisher, would be for someone to ghost an autobiography of Jessica Dubroff as dictated to her self-absorbed mother through a spiritualist medium. Possible titles: *I'll Never Fly Again,* or, more positively, *Flying High,* or, less so, *A Wing and a Prayer,* or *Ghost Rider in the Sky* — or, but no, this is almost too cruel even for a cynical Criticus. The fear is that someone really will do it.

As I write there is occurring a literary-commercial event called the "*Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books," held on the UCLA campus on a two-day weekend. Celebrating books and readers in this way is no doubt a worthy endeavor, but it looks to have more the air of a massive book signing — and massive book selling — than anything else. For every category of books and speakers listed in the special section of the Sunday *Times* devoted to this event there is also a booth listed where one can conveniently buy the books of the authors in each category. Those categories cover a large range of topics, not by any means confined to celebrity books, but not excluding them either. After all, one of the event's speakers was Jim Wright, late of the U.S. House of Representatives, whose book was the proximate cause

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of his untimely exodus from that august body. As the Critical eye surveyed with extensive view the various fields and topics that were to be covered, it did find some omissions. There was not a single category or booth that appeared to be devoted to anything that could be called works of scholarship, even popular scholarship such as, say, biography, history, theatre, dance, music, art, literary criticism, or for that matter science. But then this event was only being held on the campus of the largest university in the state. Presumably they know their audience. In advance of the day the *Times* served up a ponderous piece of hype masquerading as an editorial that boasted that the areas covered would reflect the "cosmopolitan" character of Southern California. This looks to be the word-in-waiting to replace "multicultural" and "diversity" when they have finally worn out their welcome.

As my lately deceased scholarly mentor, the great Dudley Johnson of Princeton, said when he sent me off into the groves of Academe that gradually turned into swamps, "Scholarship is a proud and lonely profession." Whether there's much pride left in it is debatable, but judging from the festival of books, it certainly is lonely. CPR

BOOK REVIEW

The Professor's Revenge

BY DAVID F. FAUSTMAN

Who would have guessed that the House of Representatives in 1996 would be run by two conservative college professors from the South? Newt Gingrich and Dick Armey came to Congress from the ranks of academia, became leaders of the minority party, and through relentless agitation and the power of ideas (and a little help from Bill and Hillary Clinton), rode the Republican tidal wave in November of 1994 to become speaker and majority leader respectively. Then, true to their academic roots, *both* wrote books about the odyssey.

Gingrich's *To Renew America,* with its electric reliance upon the works of historian Arnold Toynbee, management theorist Edwards Deming, astronomer Isaac Asimov, and futurist Alvin Toffler, has garnered considerable attention and attracted much controversy. Armey's *The Freedom Revolution,* though lesser known, is a more disciplined and better organized road map to the conservative movement. Economist Armey is an academic scribbler, comfortable with concepts of "marginal" effects and "market clearing," and at the same time a facile quipster capable of such gems as, "Three groups spend other people's money — children, thieves, and politicians. All three need parental supervision." Armey can articulate the scholarly rationale for his flat tax proposals, and can also participate in the rough and tumble of the political arena. During the recent budget negotiations he was asked if he was there to balance Vice-President Gore; Armey responded "Is Gore unbalanced?"

The Freedom Revolution

by Richard K. Armey, Ph.D., M.C.

Regnery, 1995,

318 pages, $24.95, cloth

The *Wall Street Journal* described Armey as a "not-always-lovable lug" who is "more temperamental and dogmatic" than Gingrich, but who "may be a better window into the anger of the

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right." Currently, while Gingrich and Bob Dole are attempting a compromise on the economically illiterate proposal to raise the minimum wage, it is Dick Armey who says that any minimum wage, much less a higher one, "is very, very dangerous and damaging public policy." Professor Armey understands that if you make something more expensive (including labor), people will use less of it. Politician Armey understands that the minimum wage issue is driven by misguided socialist knuckleheads, disingenuous union hacks, and shameless political opportunists. Armey has vowed to fight the minimum wage increase "with every fiber of my being."

THE ECONOMICS and politics of "freedom," according to Armey, are based upon "the simple idea that people should be trusted to spend their own earnings and decide their own futures." The "Freedom Revolution," which Armey views as a world-wide phenomenon, embraces that simple idea, and rejects the preachings of the "secular priesthood," those "charlatans, camouflaging their lust for power in the language of love." The failed policies of what Armey calls "The Big Government Coalition" — unions, radical feminists, extreme environmentalists, the civil rights industry, organized lawyers — created perverse economic incentives and predictable disastrous consequences. Tax policy, welfare policy, agricultural policy, and trade policy must all be re-addressed in the language of markets and personal freedom. Armey states bluntly, "The New Deal ended in November 1994."

Many of the enemies of freedom belong to "the chattering class" — journalists, entertainers, lawyers — people without economically productive jobs who feed at the fringes of a wealthy society, "the pilot fish of Big Government, drawn by instinct to follow anything big and powerful." In one particularly funny subchapter, "Oscar Night on the Potomac," Armey decries the absurdity of Jane Fonda testifying as an "expert" on agricultural policy because she had played a farm woman in a movie. (There is perhaps a hope for Hollywood, however. Movie goers will note that the last word in the script of academy award winner *Braveheart* is "freedom," shouted by the Scottish patriot, William Wallace, as he is disembowelled by the henchmen of the tyrannical King Edward.)

Economist Armey is particularly good in analyzing the problems of public education — rising costs and declining quality — as classic symptoms of monopoly power. The "educrats' monopoly" has created a system "run by people more concerned with protecting the system than serving the public." The monopoly has also allowed teachers' unions to gain a destructive grip on the system and to become a force in direct opposition to parents, taxpayers, and students. "The decline of our public schools has coincided remarkably with the rise of teachers' unions, who have come to view our schools as their own private domain." "Consumer sovereignty" is the only way to fix our schools which "suffer from a lack of competition." Wealthy people have the freedom to send their children to private schools. Why shouldn't everyone have the same choice? Why force children to attend unaccountable public schools? Why not vouchers? Redistribute income if you will; but let people spend the educational dollars how *they* will. There is no rational reason why government should be in the education business at all, much less have a monopoly in the business. "Just as in 1994 we dismissed the arrogant people who ran Congress, we can now dismiss those who have recently ruined our schools." Armey believes that "free market schools" and, thus, radical education reform "is all but inevitable as the Freedom Revolution runs its course."

ONE OF Armey's axioms is: "To diagnose our problems, we must understand the full anatomy of the political economy — especially the invisible foot of the government."

Another is: "The market is rational and the government is dumb." Government is rarely the solution, and is more often the problem — with education, with health care, with economic growth. "Government half the size" should be the goal of the Freedom Revolution.

> Soon, all public agencies will be judged as either backward or progressive according to a simple criterion: do they narrow or enlarge individual freedom and responsibility? Those policies that rely on government coercion will be seen by our grandchildren as primitive and retrograde. Those that trust the individual will be welcomed as rational and humane.

The equation for Armey is simple: "limited government" allows "unlimited opportunity." The game plan for Armey is also simple: "confront the ruling elite" and fight for freedom. "This is serious business, and for the sake of our children and their children, we must see it through." CPR

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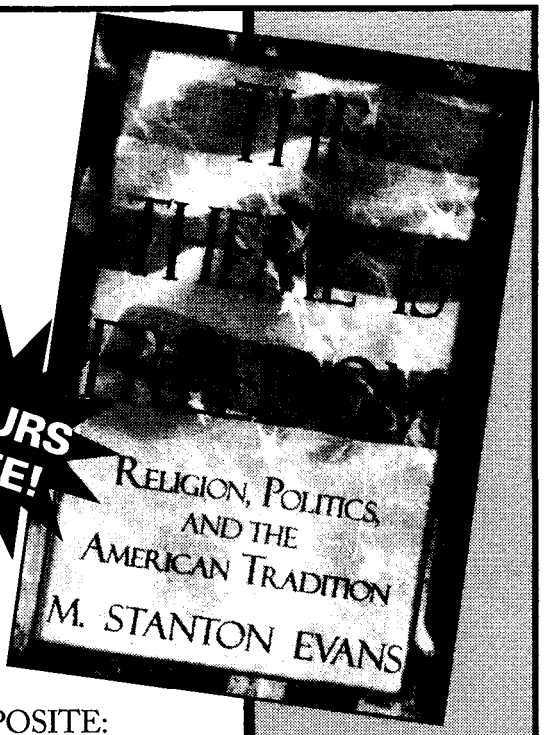
NOW, the truth about Christianity's central role in fostering our once-great system of government



TO M. STANTON EVANS,
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- ★ The real "wall of separation" erected by the First Amendment—and torn down by the liberals
- ★ The key contributions to our form of government—downplayed in standard histories—by the early Christian settlers
- ★ Why liberty as we conceive it existed nowhere in the ancient world—not even "democratic Athens"
- ★ How Christianity humanized or abolished the brutal aspects of ancient Greek and Roman culture
- ★ Why the Declaration of Independence and the French "Declaration of the Rights of Man" are not the ideological "twins" of liberal mythology, but radically opposed

Author Evans shows that the ideas of limited government, the free market, and private property, actually derived from Christian principles, and are unthinkable without them. The proof is as plain as recent history: government hostility to individual liberty has grown lock-step with its hostility to religion. Evans takes you deep into church history and the development of free economics, linking them brilliantly.

"Sure to become a classic restatement of a tradition of liberty now all but extinct in this country, but without which the American public could not have existed. If that tradition survives, it will be in large part because in its last days it could still generate defenses as vigorous as the one Mr. Evans has written."
—Samuel Francis, *Washington Times*

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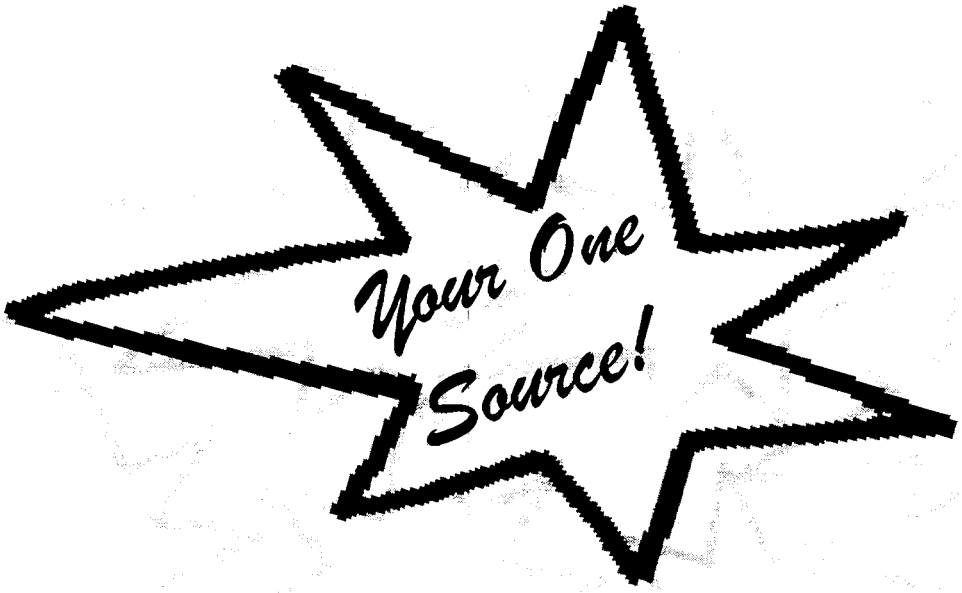

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